

*Letters
To the Mother
of a
Soldier*

Richardson Wright



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Letters to the Mother of a Soldier

Letters to the Mother of a Soldier

By

Richardson Wright

Author of "The Russians, An Interpretation"

So here, while the mad guns curse overhead,
And tired men sigh with mud for couch and floor,
Know that we fools, now with the foolish dead,
Died not for flag, nor King, nor Emperor,
But for a dream, born in a herdsman's shed,
And for the secret Scripture of the poor.

—*Thomas Kettle*



*New York
Frederick A. Stokes Company
Publishers*

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To
MY MOTHER AND FATHER
AND BOBS
WHO IS "IN IT"

Letters to the Mother of a Soldier

LETTERS TO THE MOTHER OF A SOLDIER

"The Mill," Silvermine

Dear Molly,

Did I tell you he came to see me?

It was late noon.

I had gone down to the pergola to look at the ramblers we set out this spring.

There was a great peace over everything. The air had that baked noontide heaviness; a humid mist eddied and wavered lazily in the hollow above the river. Down the road the sputter of a motor died away into a dull hum.

Suddenly the gate clicked. I looked up.

There he stood—his service hat tilted rakishly aslant one eye, the tag of a tobacco sack dangling from his breast pocket.

"What are you doing up here?" I called.

"Just thought I'd like to see you."

I suddenly realized the boy was fond of me. The run up to Silvermine on a hot day is no

easy jaunt, you know. And, besides, I've been anything but the perfect uncle!

"Had luncheon?"

"Lots of it."

"Then let's sit here," I suggested as we entered the pergola. "Or perhaps you'd rather take a swim."

We chose the swim—broke through the underbrush back of the berry patch and followed the path to the river.

You know how the big flat rock rests on the edge of the falls beneath that tall cedar, and the water rushes past through a cleft down into the pool? That caught his eye.

In a moment he stripped and was overboard.

By George, Harry has grown to be a handsome animal! The muscles on his shoulders and arms fairly rose above the stream in great humps. His face was bronzed. The water slicked back his hair and threw his forehead into relief. Military training had thinned him slightly. And I was glad to see that the lower lip you used to worry about had stiffened. He looked clean, four-squared and noble. How I envied him!

Finally he climbed up on the rock beside me

to dry off—evidently towels are superfluous to a soldier—and we drifted to the war and his going over. I surmised he wanted to talk about it.

“Well, do you like army life?” I finally asked, after he had told me of camp.

“In some ways I don’t like it at all,” he answered hesitatingly.

“How’s that?”

“I can’t say that fighting is just exactly in my line. We fellows love a good fight, but we aren’t forced to eat and sleep it the way Germans are. We aren’t trained to be brutes here in America. We treat our women differently—that’s one way you can tell.”

“Why did you enlist then?”

“I couldn’t get the beastly thing out of my head.” He waited a moment, asked for a cigarette, lighted it, and then began in earnest. “I tried to work, but work seemed so footless. I didn’t want to miss the fun, either. It seemed like the biggest game this old world has ever played. Not to get into it was a crime.”

“You just went in for a lark,” I added casually, “good sportsman stuff and all that?”

"Well, no." He stopped and seemed a bit embarrassed. Then he looked straight at me. "This may sound silly and sentimental and soft, but I think you'll understand. . . . If you saw your mother being tricked and lied to and spied upon and deceived and kicked around for three years, what would you do? Fight? You bet you would!" He smacked his hands together with an anger that seemed strange to so peaceful a spot. "That is exactly what the Germans have done here. My country isn't so different from my mother—Motherland. You understand?"

I nodded.

"And she stood for it until there was nothing left to stand for or forgive or palaver about. When she declared war I threw up my job and enlisted. Do you think I did right?"

"If you hadn't, I wouldn't have cared to see you," I answered.

"I'm glad you feel that way . . . I had hoped you would." He seemed relieved. "And I guess mother will see it that way, too," he added.

"Doesn't she like your enlisting?"

“Oh, yes! Only you know how mothers are . . .”

I assured him I did, and he dressed and we came back to the house.

That was the first Tuesday in June—the 5th. To-day comes your letter telling me that his contingent has sailed, and how lonely you feel.

Dear Molly, I wish that I could only say your position was different from other mothers', but I cannot.

The questions you ask, the wonders, hopes and fears that make chaos of your heart and brain only parallel the experience of a million mothers in America to-day. They, too, are lost with wonder and aghast with fear. They, too, have sent their sons to France. Equally upon them is thrown the burden of anxiety and dread. But there will be strength afforded by such poignant democracy.

In London, I am told, strangers stop each other on the streets, in theaters and restaurants, and fall naturally into conversation. Imagine Britishers doing that!

Much the same thing will happen here.

Harry and his fellows drill side by side because they find confidence in organized effort. You and the million other mothers will find companionship and courage because you bear a common burden in a common cause.

Naturally, the finer a mother's sensibilities, the deeper into her soul is being etched the horrible picture of the outcome. But has not this its advantages? The deeper you feel, the more you are capable of looking the ghastly fact of this war in the face without fear, without trembling.

That is the answer to your question—you must first face the fact of danger, sacrifice and possible loss. And you will be brave, you will be strong, you will be your own true, noble self, only in so far as you can take a brave, strong and noble attitude toward the war and Harry's part in it.

At present you are trying to keep yourself busy with a multitude of war relief activities. Nothing could be wiser or more commendable. Any deed for the right in this evil hour, any little act to alleviate suffering has immense value and advantage. But do not think that these will help you dodge the fact. The invul-

nerable armor you must wear in these days is unfailing belief in the righteousness of our cause.

Courage! Be brave!

The Office

Dear Molly,

Certainly this war is showing up men in their true values.

This afternoon two men were found weeping in the office. Imagine it! Men about thirty. Both Americans. Both weeping real tears.

One was crying for bitter disappointment. He had failed to pass his physical examination for the army draft.

The other was crying for joy. He, too, had failed to pass.

The Club

My dear Sister,

Your fears for Harry larking around Paris are quite unfounded. He will be far too busy to lark. Besides, you must remember that the boy is no fool.

If you bring up a boy to be clean and play straight and associate with decent men, you have done about all a mother can. Unquestionably there are evil associations in the army—

“Single men in barracks don’t grow into plaster saints.”

It isn’t a matter of chance or luck. It is a matter of breeding. The man with a strong moral constitution resists evil influences just as a healthy physical constitution resists germs of disease to which the weaker succumb.

The boy will become hardened in the army, possibly rough. This will never hurt him. A good bath and a few nights between sheets will soften that sort of callous.

Harry is a soldier, and a soldier is the an-

tithesis of the sissy. Don't expect him to be a little gentleman or a highly sensitized poetic soul. Expect him to be brutally direct—as direct as a bayonet thrust, obedient to the point of self-effacement, and above all courageous and happy.

His officers will see to it that he is disciplined, direct and obedient, but much will depend on you to keep him contented. When you write, write him only the cheery news. Spare him worries, for he will worry about you on the slightest inkling. Give him news—lots of it. Even the things that seem insignificant to you will be treasured by him.

Make him feel that you are just the brightest, bravest, chipperest little old mother in America!

Will you do that?

“The Mill,” Silvermine

Dear Molly,

When people tell you that they can't see what need there is for American soldiers' going to France to fight, they show a suspicious ignorance. That is one of the most common pro-German arguments.

They can't see why, because they don't want to see why . . .

Invariably you can measure the moral caliber of a man or woman by the extent to which injustice and crime horrify them. Germany's injustice and her criminal acts—Zeppelin raids, Belgian and Serbian atrocities, Armenian massacres and such—have been established beyond a shadow of doubt. No man or woman of principle can look upon them without being horrified, sickened and enraged.

Many of us Americans could not at first sense the injustice of the Belgian invasion, because we had no interest in Belgium. Yet that is as weak an argument as saying that you can read of a hideous crime without re-

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volting, because you know none of the persons concerned. You revolt at the thought of murder. Why? Because murder is a blow struck at the code under which we live in peace and security.

Germany's flaunting of her promises was a blow struck at the entire concept of international promises. It deliberately depreciated the value of a nation's word of honor. When she valued her promises to Belgium no more than a scrap of paper, the world of moral caliber ceased trusting Germany or giving her word the slightest credence, just as you would cease trusting a friend who deliberately, to gain her own nefarious ends, broke her promises to you.

From time to time you will meet people, glib of tongue and quick in rebuttal, who will attempt to cloud the fundamental fact by all manner of clever sophistry. In the face of such arguments you must hold fast to the basic principles of right and honor.

That is what I meant when I said, in a previous letter, that the invulnerable armor you must wear in these days is an unfailing belief in the righteousness of our cause.

This war has taught us to take an interest in honor the world over. Eventually we will become as sensitive to chicanery, falsehood and crime in a foreign land as we are to them in our own. The moral leaders of the world have always shown this cosmopolitan conscience. To-day the man in the street is acquiring some of it. He will be a nobler man for it; it will pervade, invigorate and vivify his life. It will make him a citizen of the world.

But what will you say to your friends who cannot see why? Nothing. Hell knows no fury like a pro-German scorned.

“The Mill,” Silvermine

Dear Molly,

Dusk came down the valley.

I slipped out of the Mill and took the upper road—past the store, past the quaint green and blue cottage of the pretty girl who paints the magazine covers, and up to the hill beyond where the trees arch over the path.

Lights shone out from some of the house windows. But most of the houses were dark. They looked out upon the purple hills and fast-gathering night with distrust.

The myriad sounds of night commenced—rustling in the bushes, the sweep and whisper of trees, chirps from some sleepless bird, the conversation of crickets, the far-off howl of a dog at the moon rounding the shoulder of the hill.

Past the bend came a new noise—high-pitched, inharmonious, human. But it halted me in my tracks.

“Help of the helpless, O, abide with me . . .”

Silently I dropped the ashes from my pipe

and slipped it into my pocket. It seemed irreverent to smoke.

A few yards on, and the words came clearer. They came across a close-cropped lawn and down an alley of elms. The open door of the church and the two long windows beside it cut the dusk with paths of light. Far above, the white steeple reached into the night and caught silver from the new-risen moon and sparkling stars.

“I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight. . . .”

A woman came down the steps and hurried across the path to the road. Her head was bowed. She seemed intent on going somewhere. A moment, and she was lost around the bend.

“Heav’n’s morning breaks and earth’s vain shadows flee,
In life, in death . . .”

The next time I looked up the steps were filled with people—women and young girls and an old man or two in Sunday blacks.

They came down slowly in twos and threes.

The young girls walked arm in arm. . . . This time a year ago a lad would have seen them home.

The Club

Dear Molly,

“Safe in France!”

A thrill ran down my old spine as I read it in the paper this morning, and I have been happy ever since—happy that they are there, but really envious of them.

Do you realize, Molly, that Americans who never dreamed they would be in France, are there to-day, and that they have gone for such a purpose as never before Americans went to France to accomplish!

Before this, Americans always went to France to take something from her. To-day they are taking something to her.

Think of the things you and dear old George and I went to France for—

Paris was France for us in those days—Paris of the Pré-Catalan, the Louvre, the Palais Royal; Paris of the lithesome grace and tinkling laughter; Paris of the white nights, where good Americans go when they die;

Paris, "the world's great mart where joy is trafficked in," as Alan Seeger put it.

We were average, healthy-minded Americans. We had an affection for the Old World's way of living, and a decent regard for its culture and colorful past. But we went to France to have a good time.

To-day a strange company of Americans has gone there. Men of stern purpose. Men in khaki. Men with guns and bayonets. Men with rails and locomotives and aëroplanes and artillery and all the grim munitions of war. Never before did such Americans go to France.

I am proud that we can at last pay back our debt to France. Not the debt for Lafayette—I'm not thinking of that—but our own debt for our happy days there, our golden, idle hours, our rare spiritual awakenings, our schooling in noble and beautiful things.

I heard this idea expressed by an editor recently. He has a boy in the American Ambulance who was awarded the Croix de Guerre, and in speaking of him, he said, "Before he left, I told Ned that I was too old to fight and give back half of what France gave me in the years I lived there, and that it was up

to him to square my account. Now, by George, the French have insisted on piling up my debt by decorating him! It's characteristic of them, isn't it?"

“The Mill,” Silvermine

Dear Molly,

Yes, that is a terrible fact, but it is true, nevertheless. American boys are just as vulnerable to bullets as French boys or British or Russian or German.

Somehow, we have a vague notion that because they are ours they can surmount all dangers. That was what mothers in other lands consoled themselves with—until the casualty lists came in.

We must all steel ourselves to accept these tragedies. We must be mentally ready—trained to receive blows and to “come back.” You can “come back” if you are willing to train. A boxer trains for a fight, a runner for a race, why not you, mothers and fathers, for the spiritual conflicts which are surely coming to pass?

Do not think that you can hastily acquire a stoicism to meet a desperate emergency. On the other hand, do not be constantly expecting a blow. Worry will no more prevent its com-

ing than worrying will stop a bullet in its course. Instead, go about your day with an air of determination, assurance and cheer.

Keep yourself in the best possible health. The strong body will help maintain the strong mind. Do not overdo war activities. Have other interests—go to the theater now and then; drop into a “movie”; eat out at a restaurant or a friend’s house once in a while.

Always carry your head high. You have a right to your pride. Besides, carrying your head high will make you walk correctly, and walking correctly is good for one’s figure!

I also think that the well-held head indicates the well-held spirit—a soul reserved, calm, observant, sure of itself. If you do this in public, you will also do it in private. You will be a Spartan mother.

“The Mill,” Silvermine
Dearest Sister of Mine,

When I wrote you the other day about being a Spartan mother, I hesitated to speak of the one thing that, in my opinion, is the most necessary of all.

Spartan mothers may never have shed tears, but I am sure they must have prayed.

I am not going to tell you how to pray, dear Molly, but just—to pray.

Prayer, as some one has said, is the consciousness of the presence of God.

Once we become aware of this presence, we see clearer, we feel deeper, we have a stronger grip on life, because we understand, to some extent, the purposes of God. And the more we know Him and the more we appreciate His way of doing things, the greater is our willingness to accept that way without question.

If only we could understand why God permits suffering and pain and loneliness, how much easier it would be to bear them! But that very ignorance is what challenges us to

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devotion and sacrifice and noble deeds. It makes life worth the living. It makes the mother strong and her soldier son brave.

In these days we must all lean very heavily on Him.

“The Mill,” Silvermine

Dear Molly,

I am writing out on the “perch”—the platform I built last year over the water-wheel box.

Save for a glimpse here and there through the leaves of the river gliding past my door, the trees hide me entirely from the road.

For the last half-hour a humming-bird has been darting in and out the columbine at the foot of the steps. He has a nest not far from here, and he comes and goes like a tiny aëroplane, buzzing speedily through space, his eye keen for booty. He has been my sole distraction—he and thoughts about your despair over Russia.

It is terrifying to think that the Russian collapse may require the sacrifice of American lives to counteract its results. The Russians, drunk with freedom, have still to learn that loyalty to one's country is the duty and prerogative of a liberated people, that “freedom,” as Pericles said, “is valor.”

If you knew the Russian people intimately,

you would not allow the present trouble to cloud the great vision of their future. Russia has passed through many a night as dark as this, but invariably, when dawn came, has she been found with her face to the light.

Perhaps you cannot feel this intimacy. Americans have not always been on friendly terms with Russia. There are many reasons why we have not.

Neither America nor Russia has striven very hard—despite several historical manifestations of interest—to foster an abiding friendship. Both nations have known the malevolence of misinformation and distrust. Both have suffered from geographic separation. Both have felt acutely the intervention of pernicious Teutonic influences. There has really been only a meager showing of that sympathy and sentiment which, in other instances, has bred a *camaraderie* vital, advantageous and enduring.

There is our relation to England, for example—

We are bound to England by indisputable ties. We speak her tongue, have garnered the fruits of her literary achievements and are beholden to her for many humanitarian benefits.

She is at once our mother and our ally—a stern mother, a staunch ally. At her knee we learned those lessons of law and justice upon which our code is founded.

We may not agree with all the things England has done or permitted done, yet, as she stretched forth the curtain of her habitations, she has set before us an example that we might do well to emulate. She has “turned a savage wilderness into a glorious empire,” as Burke expressed it. She has made “the most extensive and honorable conquests not by destroying but by promoting the wealth, the number, the happiness of the human race.”

Our return of the Boxer Indemnity, our humanitarian treatment of Cuba, our enlightened supervision of the Philippines—these are records of which we can be justly proud. But are they not the sort of things one would expect from America? Are they not the sort of things one would expect from a nation with such a heritage?

Then there is our relation to France.

France represents all that the word “pal” means. She was our companion on the venture of democracy. Many a time has she lent

us a hand, and given us the stimulus of spiritual visions. We know her weaknesses, and still we love her. We would like to do things the way she does them. We envy the insouciance of her spirit. France, to borrow the poet's phrase, has lived with her arm around Life's shoulder. We, too, would like to live that way.

But Russia we have held to be the wayward child of the nations. Time and again we have had reason to question the sincerity of her motives and the dependability of her word.

Russia is a land of mingled East and West. It has the good intentions of the West with the evil heritage of the East. It has constantly been trying to outgrow its bad political habits. Do not expect immediate perfection. Do not expect what even the authorities on Russia would hesitate to claim for her.

Since March of 1917 Russia and America have been bound by new ties of sympathy. But so far as you and I and countless other Americans were concerned, we very often felt those ties near the snapping-point. We wanted to know, "Will Russia do anything?"

At the time, you will remember, Haig and

Nivelle were driving hard at the Hindenburg line, with encouraging success. We figured—and naturally—that if Brusiloff would do the same on the Eastern front Germany would soon be brought to her knees. In that we made a great mistake—we were measuring the situation from the military standpoint alone.

The “dark forces” in Russia considered their country—just as we did—merely a military factor. They persistently refused to recognize what the war was being fought for. They lacked the spiritual depth necessary to grasp the immense fundamental philosophy of this struggle—the fact that in the travail of the universe is being brought forth the concept of world-wide democracy, and that Russia is playing a great part in it.

What we Americans witnessed with breathless anxiety in the early days of 1917 was the faint flutter of life in the new-born child of democracy. We wanted it to live, because it was after our own fashion and image. We wanted it to prevail against the powers of darkness lest we, too, become enshrouded in them. Had democracy died in that hour, our faith would have been vain.

Do you see now, Molly, why we must be patient with the Russians?

Do not expect that all Russians will grasp the meaning of democracy. Even here in America we do not all understand it. Russia with its 180,000,000 souls speaking 150 tongues and dialects, must move along slowly. We who have inherited the stride of freedom must have patience with these people who are just learning to walk without bonds.

It makes me prouder to feel that we are playing a part in this great liberation, that my nephew and the million other lads who have gone across are helping Russia attain the freedom for which she has fought these five centuries.

Somehow I feel that this is the "unfinished work" to which Lincoln dedicated our nation.

The Club

Dear Molly,

What books shall you read these days?

The books that you would read at any other time.

It is a great mistake, I feel, to plunge into deep despair and then try to anchor yourself there by reading a lot of pious works.

Do not read in order to forget; read in order to be normal and contented, and to understand the great facts of this war.

By all means read H. G. Wells. He comes from the future, and his spiritual development is unquestionably one of the most interesting progresses we have witnessed. G. K. Chesterton comes from the past, and I feel that he has failed lamentably to measure up to the demands of this war. Kipling, too, has done nothing more than average good reporting.

Do not miss reading the books written by the lads who have been in the thick of the fight. Some of them are the most amazing pieces of

literature—lads in their early twenties, lads who have been seared and purged and cleansed by the fire, and who speak in the simple tongue of major prophets.

It is unnecessary to tell you to read the Bible. It is even difficult to understand a daily newspaper unless one knows his Scriptures. There is a chapter—the 17th of St. John—that has meant a lot to me these past few weeks, and perhaps it will mean a lot to you. It begins, you know, with that noble address, “Father, the hour has come; glorify thy son that thy son also may glorify thee!”

Then, if you do not know them, get yourself copies of “The Road Mender” by Michael Fairless and “The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft,” by George Gissing. You will want to own them. They are not the kind of books one can borrow satisfactorily.

I am also a great believer in knowing good poetry by heart. Sometimes, when words fail us, a line of verse will spring to our lips and give us just that expression which the circumstances demand.

You might learn Henley’s “Out of the night that covers me,” and that passage from Fran-

cis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven" that begins—

"I was heavy with the even
When she lit her glimmering tapers"

and that other group of lines commencing with—

"Ah! must—

Designer Infinite!—

Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with
it? . . ."

Of course, there are hundreds of other poems and lines, and you will find those that really mean something to you.

Did it ever occur to you that there is some very fine poetry in our hymns? Hymns "fit in" as nothing else does. "O God, our help in ages past," "Jesu, the very thought of Thee," and "The Son of God goes forth to war" are all favorites of mine. I catch myself humming them now and then. It doesn't hurt. Doubtless you have your own favorites, too.

The Office

Dear old Molly,

I am glad you asked me why we are pledging such huge sums to our Allies. You could never be expected to understand the financial situation. But then, it is more than a question of finance; it is a point of honor.

First, our Allies need the money—that is obvious.

Second, we have it to lend.

But, most important of all, we held this money only as trustees.

During the two and a half years before we came into this war we made immense profits out of the misfortunes of the European nations. They were obliged to buy here, and, unless we had refused to manufacture munitions, we could not help making the money. In a business sense this was legitimate enough, but there are other circumstances in this world beside business.

Had we continued being neutral, willing to pocket our pride and our ideals for the sake of

making more money, we would have stood in danger of the greatest moral collapse that ever threatened a people. Too long have we borne the stigma of being money-grabbers. "Business Over All" was the inscription the Germans put on the medal they struck to celebrate the *Lusitania* sinking. To them, who cannot understand the psychology of a free people and of American ideals, the opprobrious phrase was justifiable.

When we threw in our lot with the Allies, we took our stand at a bar of judgment. The world was to see if the charge of gross materialism could be sustained. And we proved that we knew ourselves not the owners of this vast wealth, but only its trustees.

When America went to war, more than her bankers were enrolled—we called to the colors the wealth of our youth's vigor, the wise counsel of our business men, the sacrifices of a million mothers, the output of the mines, the energy of a thousand rushing streams, the product of ten thousand factories, the timber upon countless hills, and the growing crops of an entire continent. All America went to war. For all America knew that the hour had come

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when our nation must measure up to its professed ideals.

I am proud to be alive to-day. America has made good!

“The Mill,” Silvermine

Dear Molly,

Do you remember my neighbor Walton, whose fields touch the back of my garden? He's a giant of a man; a real Yankee farmer, with a face cross-grained, rough-hewn and weather-worn as a boulder of granite, hands gnarled by a lifetime at the plow, and eyes limpid blue like a sailor's. Usually he is a taciturn old codger, brusque and grumpy. To-day I found him quite amiable.

He was hilling corn with a horse cultivator down by the back fence. The air was heavy with the rich odor of newly turned earth. As I strolled over to pass the time of day with him he looked up, and his face lighted with an unusual cheer.

“Mornin’.”

“Good-morning, Mr. Walton. How are things?”

“Whoa!” He drew in his horse, threw the reins off his neck and came to where I was

standing. "Everything's fine this mornin'. Yes, sir, it is." Then he stopped.

"D'you remember that boy Al of mine?" he asked. There was a ring of pride in his voice.

"I certainly do. Haven't seen Al for a long time."

"No. He ain't been up here of late. I jist heard from him. He got over all right."

"Over where?"

"France."

"No! You don't mean to tell me Al's in the army!" My surprise was genuine. As a lad Al Walton was nothing but a nondescript farmer's boy with no special characteristics to remember him by.

"Yes, sir, my Al's a soldier." The old man continued. "And I bet he makes a good one. He always was a strong little tike, always gettin' in fights. I was for makin' a farmer out of him, but he says to me, 'No, Pop, I ain't gona stay here and work the way you have. New York for mine. That's where the money is.' Of course, I labored with him, but it weren't no use. . . . So Al, he went down to the city to work. He was gettin' twelve dollars a week when the war started."

Walton pushed back his hat and looked up to where the green and saffron and tannish checker-board hills stretched off to the blue horizon. A strange light spread over his face, such as glows over a summer sky when sheet lightning shoots across it. "But I guess it's all right," he went on slowly. "I've got a lot of work in me yet. . . . But here's me and the missus. And there's Al in France, fightin'."

Suddenly he seemed to recollect. "B' the way, Al spoke about Mrs. Grahame's boy Harry. He says he's in his regiment. That's funny, ain't it?"

Just then I heard the postman's whistle and went back to take the mail. There was your letter and Harry's with the same news about Al Walton. Ever since, I have been marveling at the strange bedfellows this war has made.

Can't you picture Al Walton's career? His father told me about it later.

Fearing the drudgery and loneliness and poor wage of farm life, he goes to the city and first gets a job at nine dollars a week in a foundry. That work proves too arduous and he finds himself an assistant shipping clerk in an express office at a dollar advance. A year

later, tiring of that, he lands a place back of the counter in a grocery store. From this he goes into the army—a calling where wages really mean little.

Meantime Harry is being nursed through a costly preparatory school and a costlier college.

He learns to wear dinner clothes and dance and parse Latin sentences and recite the salient dates of English history. He has a room at college that is lined with banners and posters and books and mementos of a hundred glorious days and nights.

He plays on the college tennis team, writes terrible verse for the college paper, passes through a Swinburne madness to a fist-pounding enthusiasm for Kipling and O. Henry. And then he graduates, dances all night at the senior “prom,” sings doleful songs with other girls and boys at dawn under the old elms of the campus, and next morning is awarded a piece of parchment assuring those “to whom these presents shall come”—and who can read Latin—that Henry Bartholomew Grahame, having passed sufficient courses in the required number of learned subjects, is entitled to be a Bachelor of Arts.

Thus fortified, he takes the icy plunge into the commercial world. Fifteen dollars a week as an advertising solicitor is not a bad beginning.

You, most indulgent of mothers, see that he never wants—the rent is always paid, the suits always pressed, the coin always in hand for amusements. And every few months you come to town, and he tells you there is Big Money in the Advertising Game—and you go home happy with the roseate dream of your lad becoming a Commercial Giant!

Suddenly to the boys of this country is issued the challenge: “The world must be made safe for Democracy!”

On his way home in the subway that night Al Walton reads of the war. He talks it over with folks at the boarding-house—and his sleep is disturbed by strange dreams.

That night Harry rides up in the bus, but forgets to look at the eddies of pretty girls on the pavement, so engrossed is he with the report that America has taken her stand with France and Britain against the malefactor of the world. Doubtless that night he sits by

the window, his feet on the sill, and gazes for hours over the housetops with never a word.

And finally Al Walton goes to his boss and says that he simply can't stand it any longer, and is going to enlist. And Harry goes to his boss and says he simply can't stand it any longer, and is going to enlist.

A week later they are lined up shoulder to shoulder. They wear the same sort of uniform, carry the same sort of gun and bayonet and kit.

To-night they sleep in pup tents side by side. They will live in the trenches as mates. They will go "over the top" as brothers, fighting and suffering as fellows in a common cause.

Khaki is a great leveler. Through it functions the splendid democracy of war. It dissolves prejudices and artificial social distinctions. It gives all men a re-birth, from which they start again free and equal.

En route

Dear Molly,

This is too good to keep.

As I was walking to the train this morning I met my neighbor Walton on the road. He was driving his cultivator down to the lower field.

"What do you think that boy of mine says?" he called. "Al says he's never got such good things to eat as he's had since he's been in the army. That's funny, ain't it?"

I assured him it was. Although I didn't say what I thought—that Al must have been making some invidious comparisons between the fare Uncle Sam sets out and the meals provided by a certain lady ogre of a Brooklyn boarding-house!

I suppose Harry will be writing next that there is nothing in the world to compare with army beans!

Cheer up, beans won't hurt him.

“The Mill,” Silvermine

Molly dear,

How shall you feel toward German mothers?

You say the human heart is the human heart the world over, that a Prussian mother can just as easily be broken with grief as can an American or British or French. That is very true. Mother love is a universal element. The mothers of Germany in the age of that nation's greatest and tenderest sentiment were enthroned above all else. Some of that sentiment remains in the masses of the German people to-day. Yet the training of the last three generations in Germany has not been directed toward a cherishing of the mother ideal.

The Prussian ideal for a woman is to bear children—as many as she can—cook the meals and represent the family at divine worship. This has had a terrible effect on both men and women. It has made the woman a mere bearer of burdens. It has made the man less the companion of his wife and more her

overlord. The man was highly prized because he was a potential fighting unit. He fitted exactly into the Prussian military scheme, and so did the woman, if kept in her place as constant child-bearer, cook and church attendant.

From this has come the servility of German womanhood, and a lowering of the national ideals. For the nation that degrades its women must inevitably become gross, coarse, and brutal.

Do you remember my writing you last month the way Harry expressed it? "We are not naturally brutes. We treat our women differently. That's one way you can tell." There you have a concise summary of a German national characteristic. Of course, there are countless exceptions, but the Prussian ideal remains dominant. And the Prussian ideal is what we are fighting to crush.

Some years back I was sitting on the steps of a hotel at Cortina watching a number of Germans come up the mountain. They were on a walking tour. The men came first, burdened only by their own corpulence and alpen-stocks. Several moments after the women hove in sight. Each woman carried a

heavy knapsack, and she dragged along as though she simply could not walk another step.

Later in the evening a girl of our party fell into conversation with one of the women and was bold enough to ask, "Why don't you women make the men carry the knapsacks on these tramps?"

"Oh, but I am the wife," the frau answered cheerfully. And she really didn't seem to mind it at all.

This is a peaceful example of Prussian Kultur in the working. It coarsened the men and hardened the women beyond complaint or remonstrance.

Don't waste your time, Molly, wondering if German mothers feel anguish as deep as American mothers. It would be utterly inhuman to say that they do not. They suffer even more. They have almost been forced to become numb, cold and acceptant. But it is for you to look ahead to that day when, through our victory over the Prussian ideal, German womanhood will be emancipated.

The boys who are in France may not be aware of it, but their fighting is a piece of noble gallantry. Victory for their arms will

mean victory for German women. The burdens our soldiers bear in France to-day and you bear here in your heart are carried for the women on the other side of No Man's Land. . . . Some day they will understand this.

On the road

Dear Sis,

An intense longing for quiet crept over me. I took a book, and followed the river road up to a lake in the hills, and sat down to enjoy what I had come to find.

What a disillusion!

I had thought it would be peace, ineffable peace, to lie beside the limpid, lustral waters of that lake.

Then suddenly came the consciousness that beneath its calm was a buried tumult—the constant urging of bottom springs, the blind groping of roots into the dark earth, the tireless reach upward and outward of branch and stem and leaf. . . . Only the stones would seem to scorn the tumult, stones that had passed through the trying fires and the cooling of ages and have at last attained the serene inaction of maturity.

The Office

Dear Molly,

Yes, I know the bayonet practice that Harry describes is vivid. And I guess the actual practice is much more vivid than his description. But please, Molly, don't worry about its ruining his morals.

Remember this—our Allies fought with the accepted instruments of war until the Hun turned loose his insane fury of gas and fire and contagious germs. These were the things he had solemnly pledged at The Hague not to use.

Thank God, we have not yet taken to scattering contagious germs; please God we never shall. But we must meet the foe with steel of his own strength. It would be wrong to do otherwise. You cannot argue with a machine gun; you can only answer it with a machine gun of greater capacity for destruction. You cannot compromise with a mad beast or a man who deliberately rapes, murders, loots and burns; you must kill him.

If you feel that jabbing six inches of cold steel into Germans will make brutes of Harry and his fellows, what would you think about him if he refused to do it? Eh?

In times of peace the man who refuses to defend his fellow man against the unjust and murderous assault of a thug is called a coward. How much more is he a coward who sees the bleeding and mutilated forms of outraged men and women and the ruins of their homes, and does not rush to their defense? This sort of bravery, Molly, is what you gave the boy yourself.

No parents could have watched over the training of their boy more devotedly than you and George. You taught him tenderness, unselfishness, loyalty, laughter, courage, and endurance, and with these things to play the great game. Put a bayonet in such a man's hand and tell him to kill his foe. He will kill not because he has a lust for blood, but because of the righteousness of his cause.

You can differentiate between the men who have a lust for blood and those who have not by the way they treat the vanquished foe. The difference between the German treatment

of prisoners and the allies, clearly illustrates this point.

There have been too many proven cases of Germans' shooting, mutilating, torturing and committing other unspeakable retaliations on the man who is down to leave the slightest doubt in my mind that the Prussian ideal is an ideal of blood lust.

When Harry and the other boys finish with this war there is no reason to believe that they will be anything but morally and physically strengthened. They will be so sickened of fighting, of bloodshed and destruction that they will never be able to think of taking up arms again.

But, also, we will never be able to accuse them of cowardice. They are fighting a beast that brooks no opponent, even the weakest. Six inches of cold steel is the only thing that can halt that beast.

“The Mill,” Silvermine

Dear Molly,

To-day I left the office early, came up to the country, and started out for a long tramp with Smudge. Faithful beast, he heeled every step of the way, and when I slashed the roadside bushes in my wrath and talked aloud, he never so much as growled. I am feeling much better now—less discouraged and more capable of looking facts in the face. A good walk in the country is the best antidote for war blues.

When you wrote me that the bad news of the U-boat attacks and the feeble advances of the French and British had thrown you into the depths of despair, I had a secret feeling of gratitude.

Please do not misunderstand me.

You are just a mother-woman, concerned with your home and the welfare of your boy, and the great world events have not meant so much to you before as they do now. There are thousands of other mothers here in Amer-

ica who have read the war news for three years, have taken sides, have suffered dismay or triumph, yet to whom the war was not a vital, burning subject until the participation of their own sons in it brought it vividly home to them.

Had the powers that sunk our ships been permitted to go unpunished and unthwarted, the peace and security of your home in the golden fields of the South and my little old mill beside the quiet waters of Silvermine would have been threatened. Life would have meant a shuttered house in a dark street.

We do not recognize the right to murder, to rape, to loot, or to destroy. Our forefathers sacrificed and we, too, fought that life might be more precious, womanhood more revered, property more secure, and the worth-while things of this world made abiding.

To hold fast these liberties, bought with so much precious blood, we *must* win—and win in the right way.

We are not sudden haters; but by dint
Of many horrors all our hearts are quick.

Germany reached the zenith of her aspira-

tion in a hymn of hate. We must reach ours not in hate, but in a grim determination to fight until the principles of decency and right are unquestionably secure against further attack. We must do more—we must set up such a noble standard that the German people will see through the gross deception that has been played on them and rise in their might to cast it forever from their nation.

Many times have the Allies met with terrible defeat and appalling losses. The losses and delays last week are infinitesimal compared with some that have gone before. Our American troops will also meet with reverses, and line after line will have to fall. We are not superhuman—and the foe is desperate. But in no wise must we permit this to undermine our loyalty to our causes or weaken our belief in the ultimate victory.

In dark days such as these, remember the pledge the great English statesman made. It is among the world's noblest utterances: "Never shall the sword be sheathed until the object is accomplished for which it was drawn."

“The Mill,” Silvermine

Dear Molly,

My neighbor Walton has said unmentionable things about the censor. He speaks of him in vivid adjectives, calls him rural, hand-hewn, New England pseudonyms.

I know.

Did he not hurl these adjectives over my back fence this morning? And did it not require all my powers of persuasion to get the old gentleman back into a presentable frame of mind?

Apparently Al must have been too meticulous about geographical identification in his letter, and the censor exercised summary measures.

The envelope was in Al's handwriting, but the enclosure was in another's. It bore the message:

Dear Sir,

Your son is well and happy, but he talks too much.

Perhaps this may explain some of Harry's future silences.

“The Mill,” Silvermine

Dear Molly,

You can't understand the slacker?

I do not wonder.

It is difficult to understand how a man can refuse to defend his motherland when she is attacked and her principles flaunted. And yet, dear Molly, for the same reasons that man would refuse to defend his mother.

The slacker is fundamentally a coward.

Now cowardice involves many things. Fear of physical discomfort, injury and death is one—and this is the least fear the slacker knows. Fear of material loss is another. And this is his greatest fear.

He does not fear death, because he cannot look that far. He very much fears material loss, because that marks the breadth and zenith of his vision.

If the slacker could see some way to gain advantage or make money out of war, he would go, and go gladly. The slacker looks on war as a business proposition: it interferes

with commerce, it destroys capital, it causes mercantile uncertainty. This no one would deny.

It is also part of the metabolism of the race—the constant tearing down and tireless building up, the growth and decay that constitute the human struggle toward perfection.

This war must have come sooner or later, for the cancer of German autocracy was fast spreading over the fair body of the world. Only an heroic measure could stop it. And we chose that measure.

What if our wealth does slip through our hands, what if the fields do whiten with the bones of countless sons, if only we can accomplish this purpose? For we live not for to-day but for to-morrow.

Life begins to-morrow.

You gave of yourself in pain that a son might be born, and his father labored not for his own advantage but that that son might be better fitted to carry on the work in his own generation. You have lived and worked for to-morrow.

To-day, your son bears onward that ideal, willing, if need be, to give his life for it, even

as you were willing to give your life for it.

Of these things the slacker knows naught.
To-morrow is only another day to him.

To you and to the men in France, to-morrow is a huge opportunity toward which the race must progress at all costs. They are storming the ramparts of the future, these lads. Their eyes behold the to-morrow of the world.

“The Mill,” Silvermine

Dear Molly Mine,

To-day as I was going for my train, traffic was blocked to let a regiment pass. It was marching off to camp.

There was some sporadic cheering; a woman behind me broke into tears. But, on the whole, the pavements were quiet. It was no hour for exultation, and I was glad there was little of it. The men slipped by, rank on rank, in that quiet fashion our soldiers march. Finally came the line of mounted police, and the crowd surged across the street.

“All kids,” remarked a man at my elbow.

And they were, for the most part,—“big, intolerant, gallant boys.”

It seemed a hideous waste to send such lads forth to battle. It seemed to be robbing them of so much of life—life full of opportunity, of sunshine and laughter. Yet, as they passed, I could not help saying to them, “Young men, I hail you on the threshold of great careers!”

In our poor, blind, stupid way we try to measure the value of life by length of years. We have fallen into the habit of extolling old age, of thinking that long years are necessarily full years. And it is all wrong.

Time has little to do with achievement. Earnestness, sincerity, devotion have; and these qualities youth possesses. Old men dawdle, procrastinate, question; youth plunges ahead, drives direct to his goal and never rests until he achieves it. Life is valuable only according to the intensity with which it is lived.

There are, of course, hundreds of men who have not achieved until well past middle life. But they are exceptions. This is the age of the young man. The young man who has not achieved something definite by thirty-two, or is on the road to attaining it, had better look to his honors. As William Allen White said: "Few men who have much to say or do, say it or do it after forty."

Thousands of lads have gone down in this war whose civil careers were suddenly and cruelly cut off. Yet, wouldn't you say that their death was their crowning achievement?

"These laid the world away; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene,
That men call age."

We cannot measure the fullness of a man's life by the fact that he appears to get the best out of life, but that life gets the best out of him. A man starts to die the day life ceases to draw from him some contribution for the race.

In the ranks of those men I saw to-day there may have been scores who ceased living long ago, who ceased giving to life. To them the war has come as another chance, a veritable resurrection wherein they will redeem the debt charged against them by the one huge payment of life itself.

The Club

Dear Molly,

I am watching an extraordinary sight.

It is five o'clock. The grill is filled to capacity. Every table is occupied and extra chairs have been brought in from the writing-room.

Half the men are in khaki—officers for the greater part, with a scattering of navy men in white suits. And—this is the extraordinary part—not a man in that grill is drinking anything stronger than ginger ale.

The club complies with the law which forbids the sale of intoxicants to men in uniform. The men in civilians' comply with good taste, and do not drink intoxicants in the presence of men who cannot have them.

A year ago most of those men would have been drinking cocktails and highballs.

The good or evil of these drinks is not my concern. The fact is that prohibition is coming in a way we least expected. It is non-drinking by mutual consent.

If you want to stop an evil, put it in the category of those things which "aren't done." That is what the army did, and to-day the man who drinks an intoxicant in the presence of the man in uniform is simply out of it. We require no presidential exactment or ukase from a tsar to prohibit strong drink. The consensus of opinion considers it bad taste.

Nor do I think the fashion will come back. Over a million soldiers in America to-day are not drinking. Some, because the law forbids, but most of them because a man cannot be a drinker and a good soldier at the same time. When peace comes, there will be a million men who will have learned that a clear head is the principal essential in business for holding down any kind of a job.

Yes, war is a terrible thing. It is a consuming fire. But fire is also cleansing.

The Office

Dear Molly,

Can a man retrieve himself by the manner of his dying?

The other day I wrote you that I believed he could. I said that some men would redeem the debt charged against them by the one huge payment of life itself. There are many of our soldiers who will. I know of a number of men in the British and Russian army who already have.

There was Ivan S——, captain of the 4th Amur Rifles, a Cossack I met in Blagowestchensk. I was dining at the "Metropole" when he first came in—a huge mountain of a man with a face like a clenched fist, and a most unenviable record. He had been sent out to a Siberian command to "cool off," having disgraced himself by debauchery and cruelty in St. Petersburg which even that giddy capital could not condone or forget. Scarcely a man in his barracks mess but loathed him, for, instead of cooling off, S—— grew all the worse

in this Asiatic frontier post. Nightly, his orderly would take him home intoxicated, and nightly he would thrash his orderly. It was rumored that he had killed two orderlies already.

I knew S—— because he challenged me to a duel. After that we were friends—bowing friends.

A mutual acquaintance in the Russian army has just written me that he fell in the Caucasus campaign last winter.

It was a bitterly cold night. His company had been cut off from communication with the rear by heavy snow-drifts. Man after man had been killed or frozen to death trying to bring up food. This night S—— kept his men in the dugout where there was a fire and took the watches on the listening post himself.

They found him the next morning several yards in front of the trench. His body was riddled with bullets and frozen stiff. Beside him lay a dead Turk with fresh bandages on his head. S—— had heard his cry for help during the night and had crept out to dress his wounds.

Thus died one of the vilest blackguards I

have ever known—an utterly wicked man, a murderer, a drunkard, a lecher. But he went out alone, and in the darkness gave his life to succor a foe. If S—— that night did not sweep the books clear by the huge gift of life itself, then I am willing to become an unpromising atheist.

Thousands of deeds like this, and even braver, have been crowded into the past three years. Men who in their private lives have refused to live and labor for an ideal have been willing to fling away their lives for it. From the nadir of evil many a man has risen to a sublime occasion in this war, risen to the very zenith of moral achievement. It is not when nor where they died that counted, but how. And because they died so magnificently, the world is a better place for you and me to live in.

“I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me,” runs the promise.

In that lonely hour, poor S—— was indeed lifted up—lifted up from a plane of evil living and crime to a plane of uttermost sacrifice and purity, lifted up as an example to men, that they might be nobler for his one noble deed.

“The Mill,” Silvermine

Dear Molly,

Don't blame me if I get blasphemous. The mere mention of disloyal, alleged Americans sickens me, makes me suspicious, ashamed. Yet, on second sober thought, I have the most serious heart-searchings.

If our foreign born citizens—our Irish-Americans, German-Americans, and Russian Jews are so bitterly opposed to our part in this war, then something must be wrong with American methods of naturalization. Our boasted melting pot isn't working the way it should. If after these generations of peace and prosperity we have failed to absorb these people, failed to make our country their country and our flag their flag, then it is about time we looked into the matter.

It is easy enough to blame German propaganda and bribery for this, but something is wrong with us if it is possible to bribe these people.

The other day I was reading an article on

gardens by George Cable that gives an interesting parallel.

“As soon as you pass out of the domain of formal gardening, gardening submitted to a severe architecture, our gardening is a conquest of nature around us; but it is not a German conquest. It is a benevolent, gracious naturalization of nature to citizenship under the home’s domain, and an American garden should remain American whatever it borrows from Japan, England, Italy or Holland. . . . At least four-fifths of all the commonest and most beautiful things in our garden are exotics, but they are naturalized citizens and have themselves long forgotten that they came from China, Scotland, Persia, or the islands of the seven seas.”

A benevolent, gracious naturalization to citizenship under the home’s domain.

We have been benevolent. No nation under the sun is more benevolent to its newcomers. We have been gracious and hospitable and willing to tolerate all manner of misunderstanding and imposition. But I wonder if we have been naturalizing these new people to citizenship under the home’s domain?

Our great wealth and the apparent ease with which money can be made here have given us the reputation of a purely material people. Many foreigners come to America in the same spirit that a man goes to a sanitarium—not to dwell there for the rest of life, but to recuperate or gain immediate financial health in the shortest time possible and by the most intensive methods.

The second generation of foreigners—descendants of the men who came to stay—are unquestionably loyal to this country, because they have been naturalized to citizenship under the home's domain. The first generation has a divided allegiance because we Americans have failed to make the home the reason for living here. America was once a harbor for the persecuted, where they could set up their homes and live without molestation. To-day it is a place to make money.

I do not mean to make a sweeping generalization about the weakness of the American home, but I do know that on the other side the American home has been painted in colors which make it a byword and a mockery. Our divorces reek to Heaven, our over-night mil-

lionaires act like mad men, our slavery to absurd conventions, our respect for material accumulation and our socially ambitious middle class—all these pale the ideal of home into insignificance.

Simplicity, loyalty, thrift, hard work—on these principles the domain of the home is built. Let us set up these standards, let us impress them on every foreigner coming to our shores. Let us forever stamp out that vile reputation of easy money, fast living and loose loving. Let us give these exotics, whom we would naturalize in this beautiful garden of America, a decent soil in which to take root and grow sturdily. Then and only then will the flower of their loyalty blossom.

No, Molly, the fault is not so often in the seed. Where most gardens fail, and where America has failed, is that we have not chosen and prepared the right soil in which to plant it.

The Office

Dear Sis,

I often wish you were in New York these days. There are so many unforgettable sights. Enthusiasm keeps at a white heat here. There is constant parading. Khaki crowds the pavements. The city wears a cosmopolitan air with its allied flags and men in varied uniforms—Kilties and French poilus and British officers and an occasional Cossack in full sweeping skirts and black sheepskin hat. You would wonder how the exalted spirit can be sustained, yet with each new parade the crowds grow larger.

Last week I looked up Fifth Avenue, and as far as the eye could see stretched a field of bayonets, swaying to the rhythm of a march, like wheat blown by the wind.

This week it was a vision of great mercy. Red Cross nurses paraded—thousands of them. The whiteness of their uniforms was a strange contrast to the earth-brown of the men who had marched before. I never saw so many women with kindly eyes.

All these parades have been going south—toward trains and ferries and camps and troopships. As they pass I close my eyes and dream for an instant that they are marching north, up that avenue—toward home.

Quebec

Dear Molly,

I am writing on Dufferin Terrace, the broad esplanade that looks out over the St. Lawrence and the houses huddled at the foot of the hill. From the citadel above comes the occasional rant of bugles and the "pock" of guns at target practise. A Scottish regiment is barracked there. I fell in with a group of the men yesterday. They have not yet been across, and barracks life is beginning to get on their nerves.

"Better be fightin' than loafin'," one burly Scot remarked.

"Loafing is safer," I suggested.

"Yes, but what difference does it make?" he answered. "You've got to go out some way, sometime. Lots of 'em have."

It sounded strangely like fatalism, yet the more I thought of it, the more I see that fatalism is the wrong word.

We hear a lot about soldiers being fatalists,

not caring how they die because they have to die sometime. It paints a picture of men cruel and unbelieving, scornful of the ends of living.

This may have been true of previous wars; certainly it was true of some soldiers in the Russian and Japanese armies. But the Russo-Japanese War was a picayune game of capitalists fighting for commercial control over territory. The war we are in is the biggest event the world has ever seen; it is being fought for the maintenance of the fundamental ideals of civilization. The philosophy behind it is bewildering, the heroism it has called forth is amazing, the destruction it has occasioned appalls even the most hardened. Men who go into it are engulfed in a thing so supremely bigger than themselves that personal safety, personal considerations, personal interests are entirely dwarfed and overwhelmed. They lose identity in the vastness of the cause they serve. One man writing from the trenches has put it: "We have no business worries, everything we do is under orders, and we have the perpetual sense of making our infinitesimal contribution to the biggest

and most unselfish sacrifice that the world has seen up to date."

Perhaps you have felt this at times—how insignificant you are, how entirely submissive you become in the presence of some great natural phenomenon—a storm at sea, a terrific clap of thunder, the roar of Niagara, the incomprehensible and silent immensity of the Grand Canyon. Your physical being may stiffen, but at heart you are resigned, humbled, emptied of self. You become obedient to a will not your own. Something of that same spirit makes the soldier unafraid to die.

It is the psychology of heroism that in the face of inexorable duty man loses the recollection of self and acquires a contempt of fear. The instinct of self-preservation fails to function once a man is flooded with the vastness of his purpose.

The immediate purpose of battle, the purposes the soldier feels at the time, is to kill his enemies—as many of them as he can. Don't make any mistake about that. Don't think that the soldiers of France or England or Canada bother their heads about autocracy or democracy when they go over the top. They are

fighting for very life itself—theirs and ours. They are glad to give their lives if, by the sacrifice, they can avenge the brutal death of their comrades and the filthy and diabolical outrages committed upon their women, their children, and their homes.

But back of this hate looms the gigantic figure of the ideal, an ideal bigger than any man and the dreams of any man.

From a war against invasion has developed a war against tyranny. We are fighting as much for the foe as for ourselves. Your son is offering his life to-day that German boys a century from now will not be driven forth to certain death by a military machine. "This war must not be sterile," said Alfred Cazalis. "From all these deaths there must burst forth new life for mankind."

True, hundreds of men do not comprehend the vastness of the ideals for which they are fighting. What overwhelms them is the immediate clash of arms symbolizing the call to duty and sacrifice in defense of these ideals.

That is what overwhelmed my Kiltie friend of Dufferin Terrace. There was a deep and sober thought behind his apparent cynicism

about going out "sometime, somewhere." What he really meant was that living can become inconsequential when there is something bigger to die for.

Quebec

Dear Molly,

They were of that caste one sees creeping out of big office buildings at dawn—scrub-women; oldish, with patched clothes, trailing skirts, hats tilted over one eye, and hands gnarled from a lifetime in the suds.

“I wish to God my own was on her!” one said.

“I wish to God my own was on her, too,” the other replied.

“Her” was a boat that lay beside the wharf. She wore white with a broad green girdle below her guard rail and huge red crosses, two to a side and one in electric lights swung between her funnels. Her rails were manned with khaki—earth-brown men, with here and there the blue of a nurse’s uniform and the white flutter of her veil as the wind played with it.

There were eight hundred of them, wounded, broken, parts of men. But as the hawser slid down over the wharf bits they raised a cheer that ricocheted for blocks along the waterfront.

These eight hundred had been over there, done their bit, and were being sent home. A few months hence they would be civilians again, going about their various duties through the Canadian streets, with naught to mark them save a service button on their coat, that limp, that missing limb, those scars. To-day they were taking their first step back to the old life. They hobbled down the gangplank, sniffed the air, and passed through the gate into the city.

It isn't the going over there that's so hard, they say, but the coming back. When you part, every one else is parting—that makes it easier. When you come back there are those who wish to God their own were on her—and are not and never can be.

They were a quiet crew, despite their cheers. They asked for cigarettes and telegraph blanks—that was the extent of their desires. They had little to say about themselves, for such men are "purged of pride"; and but little to say about the men who would not return. They were changed. They had "conquered self for the sake of an ideal"; they were reborn men. You could see it in the glint of the eye, the

carriage of the head, the way they looked at you.

Yes, we were all changed—even the crones.

“I wish to God my own was on her!” the one kept moaning.

“Cheero, dearie!” the other said. “Remember, dearie, we’ve got to keep the home fires burnin’.”

Quebec

Dearest Molly,

The three of them are sitting on a sofa in the opposite corner of the lounge. His mother and father came yesterday—a tall, raw-boned, sallow man with a scrawny neck, a pronounced Adam's apple and a fringy mustache; and a round-faced, red-cheeked, dumpy little woman in her best clothes. They are evidently from the country, and have come up to meet him and are staying at this big, expensive hotel so that he can have every possible comfort.

He arrived to-day in the Red Cross ship. His left arm is gone.

When I passed him a moment ago, I noticed how young he was. The down is still on his cheeks although he stands over six feet. He is fair haired and blue eyed; and his color is rosy. He cannot be more than twenty.

They have been sitting there for half an hour, now. They do not say much.

The mother looks as though she had been weeping inside—weeping without tears. She

busies herself with little attentions for him—fetches him a match, gets him a paper; a moment ago she bought him a bar of chocolate. She cannot sit still, although she is trying very hard to be cheerful. She laughs, but the smile dies off the corner of her mouth. Now and then she steals a glance up at him, and looks away quickly. She seems to be trying to think of things to do to please him, things she is going to do in the days when they get back home—pies and cakes, and comfortable chairs in the sun, and clean, snow-white sheets on the bed, and soft pillows.

His father sits very still and says scarcely anything. Now and then he tugs at his fringy mustache, and his Adam's apple bobs convulsively. He is on the side of the missing arm. He tries not to see it, but leans back against the cushions occasionally, and furtively glances up at the boy's profile. I cannot tell what he is thinking. He seems dulled by an amazement of inarticulate pride.

Between them the boy sits very straight and unbending. He nibbles at the chocolate and smiles down occasionally at his mother. Most of the time, though, he looks straight before

him, and his glance penetrates time and space.

I would not presume to say what he is thinking. I only know that his face to-day is not the face of the lad who left home for the service three years ago. Faces like that do not grow on farms. It is beautiful beyond words, tender, strong and glistening. The light that glows from it is transcendent, glorified. He has looked on the Thing which ever after makes a man homesick in his home, unable to rest on earth again. There is a great desire in it, the light of a vast comprehension, the radiant fire of a consuming love.

I wonder if his mother and father guess what that look means!

En route to Montreal

Dear Molly,

Here's a new brand of pro-Germanism. It came from a stranger—evidently a Jewish-American—who drifted into the smoking-car this morning.

“Well, after all,” he said deprecatingly, “we Americans aren't really interested in this war. We're in it now and we've got to see it through, but the general feeling isn't strong and united.”

When I got through with him he ate his words.

For only last week on my way up here I passed through a number of small towns and the sort of feeling I discovered, even in the most out-of-way village, was a burning, ardent patriotism.

There was Montague, for instance, where I put up over night. Montague has no more than two hundred souls all told, most of them old folks and little children, for the young men go to the cities as soon as they reach an earning

age. That accounts for the fact that, when the call came, Montague had but one boy to give—Jim, the hostler at the hotel.

Jim didn't want to go. He had been at that job for eight years and had not gone farther away from the town than a radius of ten miles. He liked his work, he was steady, faithful, kind. He loved the horses and used to talk to them in his own peculiar brand of Yankee dialect. No, war didn't attract him at all.

Then the boss and he had a quiet session together in some corner of the barn, and from that moment on Jim flamed with ardor for the service. He is drilling at a camp down South now, and the old folks in town speak of him as a hero. A rumor ran through the town last Sunday night that Jim had leave of absence for a couple of days and might be back—soldier clothes and all. Half the people sat up till midnight waiting for him. But something happened and he could not get there. They spoke of it in tones of genuine regret.

For to the natives of Montague Jim is more than a common soldier. He is their personal representative at the front, their sole contribution, their link with the terrible things going on

over there. They speak of the war in terms of Jim; they eat no beef two days a week because of Jim; they bake less wheat bread and more corn bread because of Jim; they knit hour by hour and snip lint and roll bandages because Jim has gone to the front.

The natives of Montague do not consider Jim a symbol, but a symbol Jim is, nevertheless, just as to you Harry is a symbol and to my neighbor Walton Al is a symbol.

We live our lives in symbols and for symbols we make our sacrifices—for a bit of bunting, for a uniform, for a sign set in the sky. The great ideals of this war are too gigantic for us to grasp in their entirety. In the white heat of the world's fury we cannot see the crucible that holds our precious aspirations. We can only see, looming large before us, the figures of the men who tend that furnace. They are our boys. The war means them. For them we are a united people, and for them we will make our sacrifices. We will eat less, we will spend less, we will do without, that added strength may be given them.

Our unity lies in our abiding interest in the symbols that represent us and our cause.

Montreal

Dear Molly,

The thing that amazes me about these returned Canadian soldiers is their infinite superiority to the rest of the people. Not that they show it, not that they speak it, but that they are.

In the presence of a common soldier with the gold braid of a wound on his arm I feel peculiarly humbled. I owe so much to him. He has been fighting for three years to keep our homes safe. We have only just discovered that they were in danger.

Montreal

Dear Molly,

This morning I drifted into a church. I had not intended going, because it was so warm and sunny outside, but the sound of an organ caught my ear and I went in.

I expected a congregation crowded with black, for this city has paid a heavy toll of lives in the recent British advances. The women wore anything but black. Later in the day I mentioned it to my host.

“No, we aren’t wearing mourning, by common consent. Too many of us have lost our dear ones to mourn, and the work ahead is too gigantic for us to stop and think about the conventions of dress.”

It sounded a bit cruel at first, but I saw what it meant. These Canadian women have thrown everything into the crucible of the war—their husbands, their sons, their brothers, their pride and vanities, their hopes and dreams—even their sorrows. It takes great faith to do that, Molly dear, and greater fortitude to

go on doing it when the end is nowhere in sight. Of you American mothers the same price will be exacted. In that day I know you will all be as brave.

Not long ago I sat with a mother whose son has gone to France with our army. She had seven children, and she brought up each of them according to his capacities. One adopted the army as his profession, and he has been in it now four years. When the order came to go abroad he wrote his mother, "I am going to France. I may never come back. But with that I am satisfied. I know this is exactly the sort of thing you hoped I would do if the chance came."

"And it is," she said. "I raised him to be a soldier. He is my youngest, and he always wanted to be a soldier, so I helped him all I could to be a good one. If he had failed now, I would consider that I had failed as a mother. I would be ashamed, not because of his weakness, but because of mine."

She knows little of the world, this mother, little of books and dress and the things most of us take pleasure in. Her world is her children. She has lived for them alone, and her devotion

encompasses them. Her reward is their success—the attainment of the men and women she dreamed they would be. She is but one of the million mothers in America to-day who have sent their sons forth to battle, but to me she is the mother of America.

I take her frail hands and feel in them the strength of myriad sons and daughters. I look into her eyes and behold the rapturous triumph of complete surrender. I touch her lips and am made clean and noble and strong.

The strength of America is the vitality of her energizing love. Among shifting illusions, in the strife and greed and lust and empty mirth of life, above the smoke and wrack of battle, in the midst of foes, this abides—the vision of her abundant sacrifice. She who gladly would have lost her life that life be found, renewed, reborn, surrenders it once more in her sons. And in their going forth she has given them, to treasure everlastingly, the image of all that they might be.

Toronto

Dear Molly,

I am in a strange household. It is a big country place outside of Toronto—an estate, in fact, and save for the host and his wife I am the only man in mufti here. All the others, fifty of them, are officers. Mr. ——— turned over his place as a recuperation camp to the government. He and Mrs. ——— are living in the lodge. I have a cot in what used to be a hostler's room. The big house is fitted out with all modern facilities for the care of the wounded, and both these good people spend all their time helping the doctors and nurses look after the men. They are all fine chaps. Some of them will return to the service, but several of them will never be able to do much except sit about in the sun until the Night comes down.

One of these chaps has quite won my heart. He is a university man, was specializing in law when the war broke out. He was gassed and

lost an arm at Mons. But he's plucky, and plans to go on with law when he's better.

Yesterday I sat by his chair and he showed me a collection of addresses to soldiers that he was making. They were reports from papers, scraps of translation, and bits of diaries recording what commanders had said to their men as they went into battle.

I am copying out three of them for you. Perhaps you might like to send them on to Harry.

The first is the address given his men of the Expeditionary Force by Field Marshal Kitchener. The men were told to keep it in their active service paybook which they always carry. It goes as follows:

You are ordered abroad as a soldier of the King, to help our French comrades against the invasion of a common enemy.

You have to perform a task which will need your courage, your energy and your patience.

Remember that the honor of the British army depends on your individual conduct.

It will be your duty not only to set an example of discipline and perfect steadiness under fire, but also to maintain the most friendly relations with those whom you are helping in this struggle.

The operations in which you will be engaged will for the most part take place in a friendly country, and you can do your country no better service than in showing yourself in France and Belgium in the true character of the British soldier by being invariably courteous, considerate and kind.

Never do anything likely to injure or destroy property, and always look upon rioting as a disgraceful act.

You are sure to meet with a welcome and to be trusted. Your conduct must justify that welcome and that trust.

Your duty cannot be done unless your health is sound, so keep constantly on your guard against any excesses.

In this new experience you may find temptation both in wine and women. You must entirely resist both temptations, and while treating all women with perfect courtesy you should avoid any intimacy.

Do your duty bravely. Fear God and honor the King.

Another was the address made by a Japanese officer to his men just before they went into a charge. It is one of the noblest utterances I know:

Soldiers: Some of us will not be so fortunate as to have the honor of giving our lives for our country to-night, and we must endeavor not to give them unnecessarily, as they may be wanted for another occasion.

The strangest of all was an order once issued to the Russian Army by General Dragomiroff of St. Petersburg. It is called "The Soldier's

Memento," a strange mixture of piety and practical advice. It sheds a light on the Russian Army that used to be and the deep fire of religion that drove its men to Titanic sacrifices:

The soldier is Christ's warrior.

Do not think of yourself, think of your comrades. Perish if necessary, but save your comrades.

Under fire, scatter yourselves. March in groups under attack, for one must strike with the fist, not with fingers—foot helps foot, hand strengthens hand.

One misfortune is no misfortune, two misfortunes are only half a misfortune. Breaking the ranks, that is misfortune!

Only he is conquered who is afraid.

Strike; do not ward off blows. If your bayonet breaks, strike with the butt-end; if that breaks, use your fists; when your fists are bleeding, use your teeth. One only really fights when fighting to the death.

In the battle the soldier is sentinel; do not let your weapon fall from your hands, even in death.

Take aim for each shot: shooting right and left only amuses the devil.

Be careful with the cartridges, for if you shoot at distance, you will find an empty case when you ought to have a full one. For a real soldier thirty cartridges would suffice in the hottest fight. Pick up the cartridges of the wounded and dead.

God protects the brave.

The good soldier has no sides or back—the front is always to the enemy.

Always face cavalry—let it come to 200 paces, fire, fix bayonets, stand firm.

In war you will neither eat nor sleep your fill; you will be worn out. That is war, and it is a difficult trade even for a soldier; but it is terrible for a soft soldier. But if it is hard for you, it is no better for the enemy. You see only your own trouble, not his; all the same it is there. So do not be discouraged. You will conquer! “He who perseveres to the end shall be saved.”

Victory is not gained by one blow. Sometimes you will not succeed at the second or third—attack a fourth time, and more often if necessary, until you have attained your end.

He who leaves the ranks during a fight to help the wounded is a bad soldier and not a man of feeling. His comrades are not dear to him, but his skin is. Beat the enemy and all will be well, the wounded as well as the whole.

Never leave your place in a march. One minute, and you are 120 steps behind. March gaily.

Rest is not even for all at bivouac. Some sleep, some watch.

If you are in command, keep your men together solidly; give them reasonable orders, and do not command them as you would a brute. Begin by saying what they must do, so that every man will know where and why he goes.

Die for your faith, for your Tsar, for Russia; the Church will pray for the dead, and also for those who will live to get honor and glory.

Never ill-treat the inhabitant; he will supply your bread. The soldier is no brigand.

Let your clothing and weapons always be in order. Take care of your gun, your cartridges, your biscuit and your legs as if they were your eyes. Wrap your feet well in linen, and rub them with fat: it is good.

The soldier must be strong, brave, firm, just and pious. May God grant him the victory!

Heroes, God leads you. He is your General!

Toronto

Dear, dear Molly,

I am too busy to write much of a letter. Haven't the heart for it either. One of our men died last night—a lad of twenty-five who won the D.S.O. at Loos. He was an orphan, thank God, and we are the only ones to whom his going means much. He was wounded three times, and each time he went back. Then the Boches gassed him.

Three years ago he was a station agent at some little town on the C. P. R. He started in as a private and worked his way up to a commission by sheer bravery. It had made a gentleman of him. He told me so himself—gave him wider visions and bigger thoughts.

He believed he was getting better and he looked forward to his life ahead like a child on the night before Christmas—impatient, eager, anxious, fearful with the very anticipation of it. Then suddenly he took a turn for the worse, and to-night he went out.

I know now that a man can lose the whole world and gain his soul.

On the way home

Dear Molly,

You have heard George and me speak of Barker, Sidney Barker? He was with us in college, in the class below. A whole-hearted sort of chap, with a twinkle in his eye. He used to have a fine voice too, and was in great demand at college affairs.

I haven't seen Sid for fifteen years. This morning as I was sitting in the chair car he came in. Same old boy! He slapped me on the back and asked if I was making money in the writing game. I retaliated with the same question about automobiles.

"Money in automobiles? Why, I haven't made a cent of money for the past month. Not a sou markee!"

"The war hit you?" I asked.

"Well, ah, not the way you mean." He set down his bag and shoved his hat on the back of his head. "Come on in the smoker. I've two of the rottenest cigars you ever tasted. Friend gave 'em to me."

They turned out to be the sort that bank

directors smoke at meetings, but that is neither here nor there. Between puffs he told me the story of the past few months.

For the last ten years he has been in the automobile business, making money hand over fist. He had a big house and entertained a lot. His boy—the only child—was up at college and was graduated this June. The first day out of college he joined the marines and went across with Pershing. Just a private.

He did it with his father's consent. Barker always was a big man.

But as the days went on, Barker realized that giving his son to the cause was not enough. He wanted to give himself.

He and Mrs. Barker talked it over, laid their plans, and before the week was out they were ready to throw up their own interests and join the big game. He sold out his business, sold his house and most of the furniture, gave half of the proceeds to the Red Cross, and then offered his services to the Y. M. C. A.

When they asked him what he thought he could do, he said he could sing. Imagine it! A millionaire, a big executive, giving that as his talent!

Well, they took him at his word. He could sing. What's more he could get along with men. The next thing he knew he was ordered to a cantonment as a song leader.

To-day Mrs. Barker has two rooms in a little country hotel in a town near the cantonment and Barker sleeps in a bunk in the back room of a Y. M. C. A. building.

"And d'you know, boy," he said, laying his hand on my arm, "it's taken ten years off our lives. We're absolutely wrapped up in it. We've never been so well and so happy. The car's down there. The Missus has it most of the time, because I'd rather hoof it. She comes over every day and sees that I change my shirt, and the rest of the time she's playing around with the officers' wives and knitting. Oh, she's a great little knitter!"

"What do you do?" I asked.

"Well, I hang around the building, help sweep it out in the morning, take my turn back of the counter, talk to the fellows who look lonely—and a lot of 'em did at first—work the picture machine and lead the singing. We sing almost every night—all the old college stuff and a lot of new songs besides. D'you

remember 'The Bells of Hell'? We call that 'Hymn No. 9.' You ought to hear 'em sing it!" And he went off into a great guffaw.

"Yes, sir, I'm up at six every morning, eat three square meals a day, walk about ten miles, and when nine o'clock comes, believe me, I'm ready for the hay!"

I only wish he could have been with me longer. But he had to stop off at Buffalo. He was going to "hold up" a millionaire for "fifty thou."

And to think this was the Barker I used to paddle in his freshman days!

“The Mill,” Silvermine

Dear Molly,

Home again, and off to-morrow. Between Barker and Canada, the war has got under my hide. It is silly to work at a desk any longer. To-morrow I go to the cantonment where Barker is. If they can find a place for me, I'll take it. I don't care what it is.

Meantime, here is your letter of the 17th awaiting me when I come home.

I knew you would understand my letter about the mothers of America. I often think of George these days, too. Dear fellow, how proud he would have been of Harry!

Perhaps it is only right that you mothers should have all our sympathy, but the fathers of America are also carrying a burden in their hearts these days. Don't forget that. You women can shake off your loneliness and bewilderment by knitting sweaters and doing Red Cross work, but a man can only go on at the same old job and give every possible cent to the cause.

I don't suppose you mothers could be improved much, yet you are not the only ones. The going of their sons has worked a great transformation among fathers. They look ahead, just as you look ahead, fearful of the outcome. The man child who bears their name is at the front. Here is pride for you! Here is also dread and anxiety and speechless horror.

For a man looks on a son as an artist looks on the statue or the painting that his hands have created. He is the embodiment of his dreams, his wealth, his playmate, his scholar, his tutor, his available future. The mistakes he has made he shall rectify in his boy. The weaknesses to which he has succumbed, his boy shall conquer. To a father his son is his second chance, his beginning again, his hope of eternal salvation. So long as he has that boy he is immeasurably rich and his future is safe. When he loses him, he loses his immortality in the flesh.

Christopher Morley has put this feeling exactly in a little poem:

There is a secret laughter
That often comes to me,

And though I go about my work
As humble as can be,
There is no prince or prelate
I envy—no, not one.
No evil can befall me—
By God, I have a son!

Fathers feel more proprietary about their boys than mothers do. That perhaps accounts for the fact that some fathers do not get along with their sons; to youth ownership is a galling yoke. But that very sense of ownership makes the loss of a son all the harder to bear.

Create an image after your own fashion. Mold it to the perfection of your dreams . . . Then send it forth, fling it away . . . Look ahead to thwarted years, to dreams that never can come true. Live on and work on with nothing more to sustain you than the bitter consolation that in the hour of trial he did not fail. . . .

My God, Molly, is it any wonder men have stopped drinking?

Camp —

Dear old Molly,

Three months ago this was a farm. A little whitewashed stone farmhouse stood near the road with its red barns and cow sheds on the hill behind. Before it, to a wood a mile or more away, stretched the fields, with corn in tassel and rustling wheat and apples greening on the bough.

To-day seven hundred buildings stand there—barracks and store sheds and artillery stables and power stations and water towers and the myriad mushroom shacks of construction work. Macadam roads circle the camp and cut through it. Down toward the wood is a huge drill ground with the corn stubble still standing. The corn shocks now hang from stanchions in grewsome rows against the sky, like murderers on a gallows tree; and eight hours a day men rush at them with bayonets and stab into the heart where the golden ears were.

Stand wherever you are, and on all sides are

men drilling—in company streets, before barracks, in corners of the fields, along the great macadam highways. They are eternally marching, wheeling around, counting off. In a few weeks these thousands of men will move and act as one. When the hour of attack comes they will respond subconsciously to commands, think about them as little as you and I do about breathing and walking.

The purpose of military drill is to reduce men to a common factor. First they receive the uniform, which molds them into a standardized being; then they are drilled to standardized actions. In the hour of battle the commander will know exactly what his men will do. Without this endless drilling they would be nothing more than a uniformed mob—cannon fodder at best.

These men were all taken by the selective draft—plucked out of jobs, from family hearths, off the streets. They represent all walks of life, kinds of work and professions, social and educational classes. The men here and those in the fifteen other cantonments total much over a million. Their transfer from civil life was effected by the agency of public

opinion speaking through the enactment of Congress. In no country in the world has such a universal and democratic movement ever taken place. Objection to it was negligible. Most of the men, once they had broken off the old ties, were keen for the life. They are better fed, live more regular and normal lives, and consequently are in better health than they ever were before. All this, Molly, is the will of the people.

If you want to see democracy in the working, visit a cantonment. Here you see the very practical side of our nation. And that practical side is this: that in a democracy we are all equal shareholders. The country's prosperity is our prosperity, its danger is our danger. And as we share its prosperity, so must we share its evil times and be willing to defend it against their repetition.

America will have a million better citizens in a few weeks. For here, as nowhere else, a great amalgamation is taking place. In these sixteen cantonments scattered over the country we have set up our melting-pot, and the fire that burns under it is the ardor of patriotism.

Although I hate the destruction of war, as every just man should, I know that this war has come to us as our great spiritual opportunity. Kipling has put it in a verse:

Then praise the Lord Most High
Whose strength has saved us whole;
Who bade us choose that flesh should die,
And not the living soul.

We have held our liberties too lightly. We have taken our freedom as a matter of course. Now comes the test. Do we care enough for liberty to defend it? Is it so sacred to us that without it life is not worth the living?

This time a year ago these were banal questions, the rubber-stamp phrases of bombastic Fourth of July orators. Suddenly they assume reality and become a live thing.

To the 30,000 men in this camp the maintenance of the ideal of American freedom is absolutely vital. It is their business to know and to prevent it, just as a few weeks ago it was their business to earn bread and clothes and shelter. No discipline is too great if that is the end.

And these men are going to the work with

a song on their lips. They are being trained to face death light-heartedly, as befits gentlemen. Nightly for a week now I have heard them in the Y. M. C. A. halls, crowded on the benches, singing for dear life. Last night three thousand of them packed the big auditorium. And what do you think was their favorite? A fine, rollicking ballad with the refrain:

God help Kaiser Bill!

They sang it over and over. They stamped their feet to it. They waved their arms. But from a rollick it became a solemn event; from a street ballad a hymn of heroes, a prayer of dedication.

God help Kaiser Bill!

I hope He does. I hope He helps him see the light before it is too late. For, as the other song that these men sing goes,

We won't come back till it's over Over There!

Camp —

Dear Sis,

What do I do down here?

I play ragtime. I play it for an hour every night, between seven and eight. And you ought to hear me! Barker stands on the platform and leads the singing. I bang the box. The boys do the rest.

Do you know, I never played ragtime before in my life, and as for jazzing into double syncopation, it was an unknown world! For the past five years I have been mooning around with Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakoff and Dubussy, playing the proper things, and thinking I was getting all there was to be had out of music. Just as if music were only for the cultured and the highbrow!

Down here we have music for the mob, and I'm beginning to see that the men who wrote "Keep the Home Fires Burning" and "Over There" have done more for the people than all the Tchaikovsky's in the world. It's the dif-

ference between riding in a Rolls Royce and riding in a Ford. And I choose the Ford every time now.

Camp —

Dear Molly,

Yes, I have changed, and I'm not ashamed to acknowledge it.

I used to look on the war intellectually, dispassionately. To-day it is a real menace to me. And the sooner we can spread the fear of this menace throughout America, the sooner we will be able to crush it.

America is not awake to what it faces. We haven't got past the flag-waving stage. Wait until our papers are filled with casualty lists. Wait until you read, with each breakfast, the names of the men you knew who have made the supreme sacrifice. Wait until our boys crawl back to tell us the things that actually happen. We dare not print them in our papers. We can only hear them from men who have seen them committed.

What does it mean to American mothers that scores of hospitals in France hold their hideous quota of outraged women, insane or on the verge of insanity, pleading for the re-

lease of death? Does the awful collapse of the morale of European womanhood mean anything to you? Do crucified, maimed, syphilitic children mean anything to you?

You want to know what you can do beside Red Cross work and buying Liberty Bonds. You can do this: You can go among the men and women of your town and awake them to the perils of America and the cause for which we are fighting.

This war has only started. Tell them that. Tell them that no sentimental twaddle will do these days, that they must all be in this war, and in it to their utmost. Grim determination. That's what we want! Realization that Germany is winning. That's what we want! Don't look on German atrocities as idle gossip. They are true, and you have heard only the least of them. Don't think that we are winning. Look at the map of Europe and see how much we are winning.

There's your work, Molly. Start in your own town, and awake the men and women there to the grave perils that confront us.

Camp —

Dear Molly,

Here is the real thing.

It happens every night on the parade ground.

The field is a mile each way. For a background stand the trees, glorious in the red and bronze of their autumn foliage. The skyline blurs off to nothingness in the night mist. A darkening sky settles down fast to the westward, shot with shafts of red and gray and salmon. The welter of barracks softens, ages, dims in the dusk.

The men march on the parade grounds—three thousand or more of them. They come from all directions in snaking columns of fours, and stretch from one end of the field to the other. The ends are lost in the distance. Far down the field, a speck against the stubble, stands the colonel. The little group behind him is the band. The men move in a sweeping rhythm, their lines double, extend. Hands swing in unison. Feet scuffle together and grow still.

Of a sudden an appalling silence. Nature was never so hushed. You catch at your breath. Something unseen grips you, makes you rigid. The brown lines, too, are rigid. The sky darkens ominously. It portends a great and solemn event.

Then the first notes of "The Star Spangled Banner."

Three thousand hands spring to salute. Three thousand faces turn toward a bit of bunting slowly fluttering down the dusk wind. A soldier reaches out to catch it in his arms.

The band ceases . . . Silence again.

A sudden command, and rank on rank the men disappear into the dark.

I have often heard soldiers speak of the flag. They talk about it reverently, with tender recollection, as a man talks about his mother. Somehow, I used to think them a bit sentimental, probably cantish. I felt that their fine words were merely the stereotyped phrases of men drilled to say such things. I know better now. It is a live thing to them, a real presence—the presence of America and all that she has been and will be.

A bit of bunting sliding down a pole . . .

Three thousand men at salute . . . They call the ceremony "Retreat." I think of it as worship.

For to army men this nightly lowering of the flag is an act of supreme worship. They take it down with honor, for with honor it was placed there. They receive it tenderly, because they love it. In its presence they are reverent because to it they present the offering of their opportunities, their hopes, even their very existence.

Crusaders battling to defend the Sacrament . . . Soldiers to defend the flag, fighting for a Real Presence.

And in their fighting lies the better part of worship. For theirs is worship that presupposes action, service, sacrifice. Here nightly men dedicate their lives.

Remember that whenever you see the flag. Remember the men who have died for it and will die. Remember these men standing in the dusk, rigid with reverence.

"The Mill," Silvermine

Dear old Sis,

They've given me three days' leave of absence. Things up here at The Mill needed attending to, and I am hustling to get them all arranged by Monday night. So this is just a note to tell you of an incident.

Yesterday as I was working out on the "perch" I heard footsteps on the stairs. Mr. Walton was coming up. He was in his Sunday blacks. I wondered what it could mean.

As he came up I saw that his face was tense. He carried a paper in his hand. When he reached the top he dropped into a chair and looked across at me.

"Well, Al's gone."

He handed me the paper.

Struck by a shell a week ago while moving up ammunition.

For a moment neither of us said anything, although we looked each other face to face.

"I would to God that I could . . ."

He fell back in his chair, the oath unfinished on his lips.

We sat together a long time silent. Finally he got up, walked to the railing and looked through the branches to the wide reaches of the river beyond.

“Well, here’s me and the Missus . . . And there’s Al—in France.”

As I laid my hand on the old man’s shoulder he nodded his head slowly, and then went down the stairs.

Back in Camp

Dear Molly,

The passage you wanted is from "The Spiral Way" by John Cordelier.

"Nothing shall explain the mystery of Love and Pain but a sharing of it. Nothing shall initiate us into the Life of God, which is our peace, if we turn from the cleaving sword and outstretched arms that make up the everlasting mercy of the Cross."

Camp —

Dear Molly Mine,

The going of Al Walton has made these thousands of lads around here seem doubly precious to me. Not that Al Walton meant anything personal to me, or that these lads would under other circumstances, save as human beings, American-born. I find myself suddenly confronted with the realization that these boys and those who have already fallen have made the ordinary manner of dying a sordid end.

Somewhere Dr. Johnson said that it was a sad sight for a man to lie down and die. For most of us death is a pitiful struggle. We wear out, peter out, abuse to death our God-given potentialities. We fight to hold the mastery over things not worth the holding—a world-worn carcass, a broken will, a disillusioned faith, a rusty, old, sin-eaten conscience.

How much more do these lads give up!—A strong body, an unsullied mind, a young faith, a will to conquer. That is what makes

their dying so valuable. They offer for the accomplishment of an ideal what you and I can never offer—the things we have long since lost.

I would not say that men go into battle deliberately to die, but I do know that they are willing to die, to suffer the exquisite agony of wounds, if by that sacrifice their purpose be gained.

There's the word! A soldier approaches death "face-fronted, standing up." Flooded with the grim necessity for victory, he walks to it open-eyed and willing. He dies with a purpose.

And the more I see of life and men, the more I envy him his opportunities.

It is easy enough for me, I know, to sit here and write on glibly about death being only a bend in the road of life, the opening of a bolted door. But these things it must be if my faith is not vain. More, I am sure that the way a man enters that door will have much to do with his life beyond it—whether he creeps in because he can't keep out, or walks fearlessly to it and knocks to be admitted.

Camp —

Dear Molly,

When I was packing up my belongings in Silvermine last week I came across some things that made me quite a youngster again.

There was a box of toy soldiers that George brought back to Harry from Paris. There were also Harry's "patchy shoes." You remember them—how you had his shoes patched because he had scuffed them out so quickly, and how he refused to wear them because, as he put it, "a gentleman never wears patchy shoes."

These things have been up in my attic for the past ten years or more. I am sending them on to you by this post.

When I was packing up the music I came across a lot of our old songs. There was one book that George and I used to sing together. Do you remember that delectable one about—

The chief defect of Henry King
Was chewing little bits of string.

At last he swallowed some which tied
Itself in ugly knots inside.

And there was the good boy—

The nicest child I ever knew
Was Charles Augustus Fortesque.
He never lost his cap, nor tore
His stockings or his pinafore:
In eating bread he made no crumbs,
He was extremely fond of sums.

Even now I can see George standing by the piano—his mouth open like a gold fish—pumping out a most profound basso, while Harry and you doubled in delight on the couch across the room. I am sure the boy never learned a single moral from these “Cautionary Tales.” Boys never do.

And now George is gone, and Harry is over there in the trenches, and you are hid away in the South, and I, I am writing on a deal table in a ten-by-six room while four hundred men in the hall outside watch a picture show and fill in between reels with—

“Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag
And smile, smile, smile.”

I thought it would be hard to break away

from The Mill and the quiet life up there. But it wasn't. These aren't days for quiet lives.

Only, now and then my thoughts steal back to the big room and the fire and the singing before bedtime, and I go on with my work strengthened by the thought that space and time and death can never entirely separate us, that we are very close together, if love lies between.

Camp —

Dear Molly,

Perhaps I did mean that.

Anyhow, I believe it. I believe that the dead are never very far away. I feel that they come back to us on the currents of a great and surging love, as electricity throbs along wires to its appointed place.

Now and again I ask myself what would I say to a man or woman who lost a son in battle. I have written perfunctory notes to parents abroad—the conventional things all too full of conscious lies. But they are not what I would say were the parent or the wife near and dear to me.

Telling them that their grief should be easily borne because so many others are grieving is consolation that amounts almost to insult. Saying that they should be proud is a bitter thought. Pride they will have, but it will be pride dimmed with tears. Acceptance of God's will is easy enough to preach but not easy to practice. It is this sort of preachment

that makes men rail at God. No, we must have something that comes closer to our feelings than these, and I believe it is to be found in the realization that the dead are very near to us, much nearer than any of us ever realize.

What we dread most is their absence, their not coming back. If we can believe that they are not far away, that they can and do return to us, then, why need we mourn?

“I believe in the Communion of Saints.”

Camp —

Dear Sister,

It is silly for you to worry. The boy has either not had time to write or his letter has gone astray.

You must remember that the men in the trenches have but few facilities for writing letters because they cannot add even the light weight of paper and pencil to their packs. Then the letters have to be censored. Something may happen while the letters are being transported back to the post. And then, between here and France the mails suffer many delays. For a matter of fact, it amazes me that we receive any mail at all from the men at the front.

So, cheer up! You'll hear from him.

Camp —

Dear Molly,

In the next room they are having a French class. The room is crowded with officers and privates. A private from Wisconsin, who holds a degree from Grenoble and the Sorbonne and who used to teach French out there, is acting as tutor. It is the most rudimentary French, and he is teaching it after the parrot fashion. He reads the English, then the French, then they repeat each phrase after him, reading it from their little pocket manuals.

The lesson to-night is "In the Hospital."

"You are better aren't you?" the instructor asks.

"Vous êtes bien mieux, n'est-ce pas?"

"You have slept well."

"Vous avez bien dormi."

"We are going to change the dressing."

"Nous allons changer le pansement."

"It will not take long, a matter of a few minutes."

"Ce ne sera long, l'affaire de quelques minutes."

"Oh! I am very uncomfortable!"

"Oh! je suis mal à l'aise."

"My back hurts."

"Le dos me fait mal."

"My foot is very painful."

"Mon pied me fait souffrir."

"My pillow is so hot and hard. Will you please turn it?"

"Mon oreiller est si chaud et dur. Voudriez-vous le retourner?"

"Thank you."

"Merci."

"I am very thirsty. Some water, please."

"J'ai bien soif. De l'eau, s'il vous plaît."

"Open the window. I need air."

"Ouvrez la fenêtre. J'ai besoin d'air."

"Will you please write my mother that I have received the *Croix de Guerre*?"

"Voulez-vous, mademoiselle, écrire à ma mère que j'ai reçu la Croix de Guerre?"

"Thank you very much."

"Merci bien."

And so it goes on, over and over, backwards and forwards, mixing the questions, halting to correct pronunciations. It is all very serious.

Camp —

Dear Molly,

Still I would wait.

When men go into the first line trenches they are very much cut off from the world. Mails do get to them and do get out, but there are times when it is difficult to bring up even food and drink. The authorities know well that news from home and letters written home mean a lot to the men—keep their morale steady and steady the morale at home—and they do everything in their power to afford facilities. In fact, a man is obliged to write one letter to some member of his family before he goes into battle.

If anything has happened to Harry—and of course we must recognize that eventuality—there may be a dozen reasons why he could not write or send word. You know that he would if he could.

Meantime, my dear sister, I beg you to keep calm and to remember that you, too, hold a trench—the trench that cuts through the heart

of America. In these days of peril you must be plucky. Our courage is the courage of you mothers.

Camp —

Dear Molly,

A night without stars.

A night of teeming rain.

The roads as plowed seas of mud and running rivers.

Here and there a light blurs through the blackness. A soldier stumbles past, the rain streaming from his poncho.

Camp lies three miles down the road. The station is warm and cheery.

I hesitate to step out into the dark. It is so utterly unknown, for I have never come that way before. Finally I pluck up my courage and start.

Half a mile, and I am completely alone. No sound save the rain. No companion save rain and mud and the swish of my feet through it. No light. No sign post.

I am soaked through to the skin. My hat brim bends around my face. Water streams from my finger tips.

I do not know the way. I can only go on.

It is such a night as when

. . . men walk nearer to God's throne
Because they find themselves alone.

A mile farther, and a sudden light throws me into silhouette against the mud. I lurch to the roadside.

A truck splashes past, inexorable, awful, magnificent. Its tail light glows for an instant through the gloom, like an evil eye, and is lost around the bend.

I plod on, utterly miserable. I cannot go back. I must go forward—like a man between worlds, like a soul driven forth into the night.

On and on. Still no sign of human habitation, still no light. Only a great desire to be home seizes me. I plunge forward through the merciless rain.

Then the bend!

A sentry halts me. His gun touches my coat. He peers into my face.

"Pass on, friend!"

Yes, I am coming to it! Already I have passed the outposts. . . . Home lies yonder where the lights cut the rain!

I turn down a road that rings hard to my heels. Sentries challenge and cheer me with a word. I hurry by a line of darkened barracks, mount the steps and fling open a door.

A fire crackles on the hearth. A soldier sits by it gazing into the flames. He rises when I approach.

“Welcome home!”

And now it seems as though the night were never dark, nor the rain pitiless. It seems as though the journey between worlds were a little thing—an instant’s space—and then the welcoming.

Camp —

My dearest Sister,

Valor?

No, you must have even more than valor. You who are capable of courage must be courageous.

Valor is a brilliant thing and young, bred of an hour's need. She has a flashing eye and a quick arm. She marches with head erect, and the boulevards echo her welcoming. Her costume is the brilliant panoply of war, and myriad banners flutter around her. Musically her side arms clink. She fears nothing. Death is the crown of her sacrifices.

But Courage—Courage is a homely soul. Her face is seamed and her hair grayed. Her hands are gnarled from hard labor and her back bent with carrying great burdens a long way. Silently she stumbles forward, alone; and few know her passing. Her arms are prayer, hope, faith. She fears naught save the mercy of God. Death is the least of the sacrifices she can make.

For Courage picks up her burden after Death has passed, and she carries it on, tireless, unreluctant, her eyes fixed upon the horizon. There she knows will appear, in His good time, the Dayspring of Peace.

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